Literature and Psychology

THE QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER OF THE CONFERENCE ON LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

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> ...As the ill affections of the spleene, complicate, and mingle themselves with every infirmitie of the body, so doth feare insinuat it self in every action or passion of the mind; and as the wind in the body will counterfet any disease, and seem the stone and seem the Gout, so feare will counterfet any disease of the Mind; It shall seeme love, a love of having, and it is but a feare, a jealous, and suspitious feare of loosing; It shall seem valour in despising, and undervaluing danger, and it is but a feare, in an overvaluing of opinion, and estimation, and a feare of loosing that. A man that is not afraid of a Lion is afraid of a Cat; not afraid of starving, and yet is afraid of some joynt of meat at the table, presented to feed him; not afraid of the sound of Drummes, and Trumpets, and Shot, and those, which they seeke to drowne, the last cries of men, and is afraid of some particular harmonious instrument; so much afraid, as that with any of these the enemy might drive this man, otherwise valiant enough, out of the field.
>
> --John Donne,
> Devotions, VI
> [suggested by L. M. M.]

We open our fourth year of publication with a fleeting glance at debits and credits, at gains and losses since the first Conference on "The Psychoanalytic Approach to Literary Criticism" was held in New York in 1950. We rejoice in the growing interest and loyalty of our members and subscribers, some of whom have been with us since our inception; we regret the loss of many who have subscribed for a year and decided not to (or neglected to) rejoin us. We are delighted with the growing number of papers read at the annual meetings of the MLA which make sound critical use of depth psychology; we deplore the surviving tensions which result in a titter when the word "sadistic" is used in a paper or introduction, a hilarious guffaw at the suggestion that Iago's motives might be explained, at least in part, by homosexuality; a tense murmur at a brilliant interpretation of Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" in oedipal terms. We sympathize with those who have been justly outraged by the vagaries, excesses, and abuses

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which have been uttered in the name of "psychoanalytic criticism"; we feel a pardonable irritation when that sense of outrage is extended to our own attempts at moderate literary use of the tools of depth psychology.

Each of our issues this year will include one or more brief leading articles and notes (we invite contributions). Our section on Bibliography will be extended to include reviews of currently appearing works in our field. We invite further contributions to our descriptive listing of college and university courses germane to our interests, whether these courses be given in departments devoted to modern literature or elsewhere. The present issue contains such a description, contributed by Professor Wood of the Department of Psychology at Brooklyn College. To keep the "franchise" in the field of literary criticism by scholars in modern languages, we have been permitted to preprint Joseph Prescott's article on Dorothy Richardson, which will appear in the forthcoming issue of the Encyclopedia Britannica, to which Professor Prescott has also contributed brilliant brief articles on Joyce and Faulkner (preprinted in Faulkner Studies, Vol. II, No. 2 - Summer, 1953, p. 28). (Professor Prescott has been turning us green with envy at his year of research in Great Britain.)

Once again we repeat our desire for brief contributions in the form of suggested epigraphs, articles, notes, reviews, descriptions of courses, and annotated items of bibliography. Only in that way can we achieve our original aim to make this journal a clearing house for scholars interested in the interrelationships between literary criticism and depth psychology.

MINUTES

The fourth annual Conference on Literature and Psychology met at the Palmer House in Chicago, Illinois, on Monday, December 28, 1953, at 2:00 p.m. Wayne Burns presided and Leonard F. Manheim acted as temporary secretary since the secretary for the year was presenting the paper for discussion. A motion by Professor Griffin that a petition for 1954 be submitted in alternate form, either for a permanent Discussion Group or as another annual Conference, was unanimously carried. The chairman then announced the appointment of Raymond S. Sayers, Samuel K. Workman, and Leon Edel to constitute a Nominating Committee to recommend officers for the ensuing year. The continuance of LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY as the News Letter of the Conference was approved.

Professor Collins then presented to the Conference his paper, "Are These Mandalas?" summarizing the contents (which appeared in LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY, Vol. III, No. 5, pp. 3-6) in some detail when it appeared that few of those in attendance had had an opportunity to read the paper as published. He stressed the value of the understanding of the symbolism of the mandala, as postulated by Jung, as an aid in interpreting and appreciating some aspects of Faulkner's writing, notably the story entitled "The Bear." He pointed out the elements in the "mandala" as they are contained in this work: the square as embodied in the burying-place on the margin between the primitive forest and the plowed farm land, the circle symbolized in the pond and the circular clearing with the tall tree in the center, the symbol of the snake, and the symbol of circular motion in the scurrying squirrels and buzzing flies in the air.

Professor Workman opened the discussion by asking whether it was necessary to accept the theory of the racial unconscious in following this pattern. Professor Collins answered this only by pointing out that the symbol is one which seems, in the light of anthropological evidence, to have existed before the discovery of the wheel and which is used by such widely separated cultures as those of India and of the American Indian.

Professor Adel wondered whether Faulkner could not have obtained this symbolism otherwise than through Jung. Could it not be found in acquaintance with Hindu lore, with the customs of the American Indian? Could it not be a common fantasy independent of all learning? Here there is a fundamental problem of literary-psychological relationships. Today this problem is more complex since we must investigate direct influences and conscious use of symbolic materials which in older writings need only to be considered as the product of unconscious dynamics.

Dr. Manheim questioned the necessity of referring to Jung's influence in any case. All of the symbols are capable of interpretation through the use of Freudian guides. This led Professor Burns to inquire whether we needed Freud, either. Would not the general "awareness" of the reader enable him to make use of the symbol without guidance? To this Professor Collins replied that the symbolism was made apparent to him through reading Elizabeth Drew, not through his "general awareness."

He then went on to comment on the place in the story of the boy who was trying to mend his broken rifle so that he might hunt the squirrels who were trapped in the large tree in the center of the clearing. His warning, "Get away! They're mine!" involves a comic tone which is at variance with the mood of the rest of the story. "Mine," however, is one theme of the story. It is not comic but a relief and contrast to the main theme of Faulkner, that "no one owns anything."

Dr. Hayakawa contended that the level of interpretation suggested by Professor Collins gave to the story a dimension which critics like Malcolm Cowley had formerly missed. It is not important whence the symbol is derived. It is a matter of psychological parallelism rather than derivation. The theme of maturity and peace implied in the "mandala" is capable of only a limited number of resolutions.

Dr. Ford considered that the distinction between psychological influences on the writer and the writer's psychology per se is only one of a number of large problems in this area. Here the central point is the theme of "unity and peace" attained in a dream-like context. He compared it to the chemist's dream of the six-pointed benzene ring as the solution of a problem in the structure of hydrocarbons. The theme of "unity and peace" may be found in many settings which imply a symbolic return to the womb. The experience of Mrs. Moore in the cave in Passage to India is an example. Some of us find such fantasy-experiences in literary form; others find them in less literary settings; still others (like Jung) find them in religion.

Professor Workman again questioned whether the configurations of the symbol were arbitrary. Must we have a "key" to them? Are there implications in the thing itself, without interpretation. Dr. Manheim responded by citing Mr.

Lesser's contention (LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 3) that "the connections between various actions and meanings which run through an entire story would arouse anxiety if brought to awareness, and are left to the unconscious to apprehend." Professor Collins replied that Edmund Wilson exemplified this type of awareness when he wrote that "The Bear" is the best story by Faulkner although it contains large portions which were, to him, "incomprehensible." Dr. Ford, too, pointed out that Ernest Jones had written of the literary appeal from one unconscious to another.

Professor Perrin felt that the interpretation does help us to integrate the story. He cited his own experience in obtaining a feeling of peace and security in coming upon similar clearings in his walks. Professor Collins corroborated this by pointing out that Faulkner's hunting companion, "Sheriff Ike," had told of a similar experience which the author himself had had. It is plain that the author has synthesized his experience.

Time having put an end to the discussion, the Nominating Committee then presented its slate: for chairman, Carvel Collins; for secretary-editor, Leonard F. Manheim; for members of the steering committee, Wayne Burns, William J. Griffin, and Joseph Prescott. After a unanimous ballot was cast for the slate, the meeting adjourned.

RICHARDSON, DOROTHY MILLER*

RICHARDSON, DOROTHY MILLER (1873-), English author, born in Abingdon, Berkshire, on May 17, 1873, to Charles and Mary (Taylor) Richardson, passed her childhood and youth, in secluded surroundings, in late-Victorian England. After her schooling, which ended in her seventeenth year, her home broke up, she engaged in teaching, clerical work, and journalism. In 1917 she married the artist Alan Alsden Odle (1888-1948). With The Quakers: Past and Present (1914), Gleanings from the Works of George Fox (1914), John Austen and the Inseparables (1930), essays, short stories, poems, and translations to her credit, she commands attention for her twelve-part sequence novel Pilgrimage (1915-38), a pioneer work in the stream-of-consciousness movement.

Pilgrimage is the extraordinarily sensitive story, seen cinematically through her eyes, of Miriam Henderson, an attractive, spinsterish, and mystical New Woman. Unfortunately, she is more new than woman, since, for a character committed to the stream-of-consciousness technique of self-revelation, her reactions to her various experiences are selected and edited with peculiarly improper reticence; while hers is entirely a woman's consciousness, it is not nearly a woman's entire consciousness. Moreover, the author too often lavishes her surpassingly delicate perceptiveness upon dull material. Nevertheless, no student of fiction can afford to overlook Pilgrimage, one of the significant novels of the twentieth century.

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PSYCHODYNAMICS THROUGH LITERATURE

The course here described is offered at Brooklyn College as a senior seminar for psychology majors. It is entitled "The Motivation of Human Behavior" and is designed primarily as a part of the pre-professional training of students intending to become clinical psychologists.

The Problem

The best way to train our students to understand the subtleties of the dynamics of motivation is no doubt to provide them with "live" material in the form of subjects, patients, clients, or others whose behavior and interactions they can study directly and at first hand. This is one of the principal functions of the clinical internship which the graduate student serves in a hospital, mental hygiene clinic, child guidance institute, or similar organization.

But before the student is ready to be trusted to work with, or on, real people he should really have been guided through a number of "dry runs" or preparatory exercises which will sharpen his perceptions of what is going on behind the faces and below the surfaces in interpersonal interaction. For this sort of training, case-history material might seem to be ideal. But the usual published case history has, as a matter of fact, serious shortcomings for this sort of use.

In the first place, writers of professional case studies usually feel obligated to state a hypothesis and to set forth a full testing thereof. When this has been done the student often feels that the author has done all that he could do and done it better. He is discouraged. Secondly, the writers of this material are usually scientists and/or professionals and are not highly skilled in the art and craft of writing. Their words are not likely to evoke the lively and lifelike image or to portray the scene graphically with a few deft words. Their images are more often heavy or unevocative. The professional writer, on the other hand, is frequently one who has developed these skills to the highest degree. His description of the behavior of a certain person, if he is a really skilled writer, will evoke in the mind of the reader a full, rich, rounded and very lifelike picture of a person-in-action as seen against the background of his life and times. And this is exactly what we want our students to have.

A Solution

Our course was designed to use, in addition to some of the best available case history material, short stories, novels, and plays to provide examples of people-in-action whose behavior and motivation we could analyze and study in careful detail.

Description of the Course

The course begins with a consideration of its own rationale. We read and discuss Allport's study on "The use of personal documents in psychological science" (1) in order to reach, if possible, a consensus on the validity of the use of actual case materials in the behavior sciences. When this has been achieved, it is not difficult to agree on the value of using the so much more skillfully formulated presentations of the fictional "case materials"--the stories.

Whether using actual case materials, biographies or biographical novels (which might be considered the borderline case between fact and fiction), or works of pure fiction the procedure is usually to read the material, then call for the statement of a number of hypotheses concerning the motivation of the characters involved. Third, we choose one after another of the hypotheses for testing. The test consists of a return to the document and a search for evidence therein that will either support or refute the hypothesis under consideration. A student may be called upon to test one of his own brain children, a hypothesis that he has educed from the story. Sometimes he will experience the joy not only of discovering that this hypothesis seems subjectively right, but that he can find more than a few "facts" in the document to support it and few to contradict. At other times, he must submit to the discipline of modifying or even abandoning a pet idea when the "facts" do not support it. This kind of test may be applied not only to consciously formulated hypotheses but an alert discussion leader will require the group to apply the same sort of test to some of the implicit assumptions they are unconsciously making about one or another of the characters.

One major assignment has required the student to abstract from several incidents in a novel certain general personality traits of one of the characters --typical ways in which that person attempts to solve life's large or small problems--and to show how, on the basis of these generalizations, one could predict his behavior in subsequent incidents in the novel.

The teaching methods used are an attempt to blend a moderate amount of instructor pre-planning and definition of limits with the unquestionably valuable characteristics of "student-centered" or "group-dynamics" methods of teaching (2, 4, 5, 6, 10).

The sources found most helpful in planning the course included Raushenbush (9), Lenrow (8), Campbell et al. (3), and especially the pioneer work of Shrodes and her co-workers (11). Currently, we are using in one semester, two major case histories, three case fragments, one biography, about four novels or plays, and from six to eight short stories. In line with considerations mentioned above, the case histories we have found most useful have not been those appearing in the scientific and technical journals, but rather those

prepared by Miss Jean Evans, a professional writer and journalist, and included in her book, Three Men: An Experiment in the Biography of Emotion. (7)

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CORRESPONDENCE

Excerpt from a letter written by William R. Parker, Secretary of MLA, to Professor Collins (6 November 1953) and read at the meeting of the Conference in December:

> I had hoped that the Program Committee might meet this fall --at which time, among other things, it would have considered your petition for Group status. It did not meet, however, and I do not know when it will next convene....
>
> If you report to the Conference on Literature and Psychology about the results of their petition, I hope you will make it clear that they are not being discriminated against--that the decision is actually a complicated one, hardly to be settled by a mail vote of a Committee. The chief facts are these: 1) almost every annual "conference" wants to become a permanent "Group"; 2) the shortage of hotel rooms of adequate size for Group meetings becomes more and more acute as the MLA membership increases

and we are already confined to three or four cities; and 3) the petition of any single conference for Group status must now be considered as part of a larger question, namely, can we and should be increase the overall pattern of Group and Section meetings? I don't know the answer to this one. I do know that most hotels have a considerable number of small conference rooms, and I do know that things are accomplished in conferences of thirty people that are not accomplished in the paper-reading Groups.

Mr. R. A. Sayce, of Worcester College, Oxford (England), has sent us circulars announcing the Sixth Triennial Congress of the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures, to be held at Oxford from September 9-16, 1954. Mr. Sayce is secretary for the Congress; Professor Charles Dédéyan is Secretary-General of the Federation. Excerpts from the second circular follow:

> 1. The Congress will open...on Friday, 10th September, and...will end on Wednesday, 15th September.... [Those wishing to attend should inform the secretary not later than 31st March.]
>
> 2. ...[T]he main theme of discussions will be "Literature, Language, and Science" (Les litteratures et langues modernes et les sciences). It is now proposed that, in addition to general sessions of the whole Congress, there should be three sections: (A) Scientific method and the study of literature and language; (b) Science and literature (to 1660); (c) Science and literature (1660 to the present day). This scheme of sections may have to be modified once more before the final programme is circulated about the end of June. [The contents of this final circular will be publicized in a later issue of LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY (XIII)

At the meeting of G. T. VII (Literature and Science) on December 30, 1953, there was distributed a report of the Group's Bibliography Committee covering publications in the field from mid-year 1952 to mid-year 1953, with the notation that "a selection from this list for 1953 will appear in a forthcoming issue of Symposium." The list contains several items which have not appeared in our own running bibliographies and which are of particular interest to our group:

> Edmund Bergler, "The dislike for satire at length: an addition to the theory of wit," Psychiatric Quarterly Supplement, 26:191-201, '52.
>
> Joan Riviere, "The unconscious phantasy of an inner world reflected in examples from English literature," Int. Journ. Psycho-anal., 33: 160-172, '52.

H. Segal, "A psycho-analytical approach to aesthetics," Int. Journ. Psycho-anal., 33: 196-207, '52.
H. A. van der Sterren, "The 'King Oedipus' of Sophocles," Int. Journ. Psycho-anal., 33:343-350, '52.
W. H. Alexander, "The 'Psychology' of Tacitus," Classical Jnl., 47:326-328.
K. A. Fisher, "Psychoanalysis: a dialogue [between a psychoanalyst and a novelist]," Psychoanalysis, 1:17-30, '53.
Karl Shapiro, "Poets and psychologists," Poetry, 80:166-184, '52.
J. Lydenberg, "Nature Myth in Faulkner's 'The Bear,'" Am. Lit., 24:62-72, '52.
A. S. Brenner, "The fantasies of W. S. Gilbert," Psa. Quarterly, 21:373-401, '52.
Joan Riviere, "The Inner world of Ibsen's 'Master Builder,'" Int. Journ. Psycho-anal., 33:173-180, '52.
J. Jacobi, ed., Psychological reflections: an anthology from the writings of C. G. Jung, Bollingen Series XXXI, New York, 1953.
R. H. Woodward, "Jack London's code of primitivism," Folio, 18:39-44, '53.
V. von Weizsäcker, Der Kranke Mensch. Einführung in die medizinische Anthropologie, Stuttgart, 1952.
Gerhard Venzmer, Psyche, Hormon, Persönlichkeit, Stuttgart, 1953.

Probably the most important of all recent works in the field of psychoanalysis, apart from the first volume of Ernest Jones's biography of Freud, is

Clarence P. Oberndorf, A History of psychoanalysis in America,

reviewed by

Dr. Franz Alexander in Saturday Review for January 9, 1954.

and by

Dr. Martin Gumpert in The New York Times Book Review for December 27, 1953.

In the former review, Dr. Alexander reinforces an important point made by Dr. Oberndorf, closing his review with these words:

> Dr. Oberndorf is also quite right when he says that at present psychoanalysis need fear less neglect and emotional rejection from extra-medical sources than the dogmatic zeal of those psychoanalysts who remain emotionally fixated to the long past years when Freud's withdrawal into isolation and his mistrust of the non-analytic world were justified. [S. R., 1-9-54, p. 12.]

The prolific but always stimulating "lay" psychoanalyst Theodore Reik is also represented by a new volume, somewhat tangential to our field,

Theodore Reik, The haunting melody: psychoanalytic experiences in life and music, New York, 1953.

It is a duty--if a somewhat embarrassing one--to list a standard work in our field which has heretofore escaped our attention:

Otto Rank, Art and Artist (translated by Charles Francis Atkinson, with an introduction by Ludwig Lewisohn), New York, 1932.

An interesting aspect of the changing attitude toward scholarly criticism using the instruments (or at least the data) of depth psychology is revealed in recent issues of the outstanding scholarly journals in modern languages, for example,

Gertrude M. White, "A Passage to India: analysis and revaluation," PMLA, LXVIII (4): 641-657, September, 1953.
Harold Jantz, "The place of the 'eternal-womanly' in Goethe's Faust drama," PMLA, LXVIII (4): 791-805, September, 1953.
Doris M. Alexander, "Psychological fate in Mourning Becomes Electra," PMLA, LXVIII (5): 923-934, December, 1953.
Mabel Collins Donnelly, "Freud and literary criticism," College English, 15 (3): 155-158, December, 1953.

The November issues of College English carried the paper read by

Randall Stewart, "New critic and old scholar," 15 (2): 105-110,

at the luncheon of the American Literature group of MLA, in December, 1952, in which Professor Stewart reported on the replies to a questionnaire on trends in contemporary scholarly criticism. Question No. 7: "Is biography no longer useful as an aid to literary criticism?" produced many replies stressing the current attitude of the followers of the "new criticism" that "a great work...is anonymous, or nearly so." Professor Stewart continued, however, with a reluctant account of the dissenting viewpoint:

> Well, this separation [between criticism and biography] appeared, to be a comfortable one on both sides....Those who separate with a strong mutual feeling of good riddance sometimes have a way of gravitating together again, for better or for worse. I am more sorry than otherwise to have to report that a few of my replies (which come from persons who seem to be closely in touch with the latest symptoms) hint that the party of the first part and the party of the second part have been seen in each other's company a good deal recently, and their friends are predicting that they will soon be back in bed together. But here are the bulletins, and you can judge for yourself:
>
> Psychoanalytical studies seem to be going strong.
>
> For a new critic of sorts--though a too Freudian sort for my taste--who would reinstate biography, see Leslie Fiedler, "Archetype and Signature," Sewanee Review, spring, 1952. [Coll. Eng., 15 (2): 109-110]

We regret Professor Stewart's regret, but we appreciate the wry good humor of his "admission against interest."

Finally, in accordance with the practice which we instituted last year, let us examine the 1953 (Vol. 10) issues of American Imago. The articles germane to the field of literary criticism were as follows:

Arthur Wormhoudt, "Ivanhoe and the teacher," No. 1:39-56.
Edmund Bergler, "True feelings and 'tear-jerkers' in literary work," No. 1:83-86.
A. Bronson Feldman, "The confessions of William Shakespeare," No. 2: 113-165.
Dorothy F. Zeligs, "Two episodes in the life of Jacob," No. 2: 181-203.
Harold C. Geyer, "The mystique of light," No. 3:207-228.
Edmund Bergler, "Proust and the 'torture-theory' of love," No. 3:265-288.
Joseph Levi, "Hawthorne's The scarlet letter (A psychoanalytic interpretation)," No. 4:291-305.
Alvin Schwartz, "The esthetics of psychoanalysis," No. 4:323-343.

The last issue (No. 4) also contains a useful authors' index and subject index for all of the ten volumes of the periodical published to date.

Dr. Wormhoudt's contribution seems to the writer to be the best piece of work in the volume, one of the best that has come from our colleague's pen. While it is not necessary, nor, it seems to us, possible to agree with his specific interpretations of Ivanhoe, his succinct account of the uses of dynamic analysis in the teaching of literature on the college and even on the high school level, is invaluable.

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EXCHANGES:

Shakespeare Newsletter, c/o Louis Marder, Pembroke State College, Pembroke, N. C.
Seventeenth Century News, c/o J. Max Patrick, Queens College, Kissena Blvd., Flushing, N. Y.
News Letter Digest, c/o Lennox Grey, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York 27, N. Y.
The English Journal & College English, 8110 South Halsted Street, Chicago 20, Illinois
PMLA, Mr. Riley Parker, Ed., New York 3, N. Y.
Psychological Abstracts, c/o Allen J. Sprow, Assistant Editor, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois